

Das Konzil am Grab. Das Grabmal Pauls VI. und der „Pakt der Katakomben“ als Verständnishilfen für den ästhetischen Perspektivenwechsel des Konzils.

The Council at the Grave. The Tomb of Paul VI. and the „Pact of Catacombs“ as aids to understanding the aesthetic change of perspective of the Council

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Abstract

There are two overlooked events that shed light on the Second Vatican Council which is known for the renewal of the self-understanding of the Catholic Church. These events are the tomb of Pope Paul VI, which was fashioned according to his testament in 1978, and the signing of the so called *Pact of the Catacombs* by 500 Council Fathers in the Catacombs of St. Domitilla in 1965. The tomb of Paul VI at the crypta of St. Peter is strikingly modest when compared to the grand graves that surround it in order to express the beauty and splendor of heaven. Therefore, Paul VI's plain tomb is a radical sign and aesthetic provocation in the symbolic center of the Catholic Church. It points to the poor and wretched as the real representation of Christ and of heaven. The tomb is a reminder that they must not be forgotten and that the aesthetical ecclesiastical glory is only preliminary with regard to the real glory received by the poor and their liberation. This might designate the hermeneutics and the goal of the Council the realization of which Paul VI dedicated his life to. The second forgotten event that the text refers to is the *Pact of the catacombs*. It contains a solemn vow signed by 500 bishops from different continents, whose content includes a self-commitment to live in modesty and solidarity with the poor and the program for a Church of comprehensive liberation. Both events illustrate the change in perspective that the Council aimed at, as they express that the essence of Christianity is not to be found at the center of worldly powers but at their peripheries and margins.

Keywords:

Pact of the Catacombs, Second Vatican Council, Option for the Poor, Renewal of the Church